



'There was nothing wrong with Mahama's residence request' – K. B Asante

Source: Ghana/Myjoyonline.com

Date: 12th-january-2017 **Time:** 8:17:50 pm



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Retired Ghanaian diplomat, Dr K. B Asante says there was nothing wrong with request made by former President John Mahama to keep state's Cantonment residence as an accommodation package.

He says the former Ghanaian leader was supposed to have been granted a temporary stay in the Vice Presidential accommodation since it would take the state several months to build an official residence for him.

"You don't expect him [Mr Mahama] to move to a new accommodation which has not been built," he told Israel Laryea, host of Prime News on the JOYNEWS channel on MultiTV Wednesday.

Former President Mahama had requested to keep state's residence at Cantonment which houses Vice Presidents as his retiring accommodation package.

A letter signed by former Chief of Staff, Julius Debrah said there was an agreement between the outgoing National Democratic Congress (NDC) government and governing New Patriotic Party (NPP) for Mr Mahama to keep the house.

But the NPP transition team has denied such an agreement was reached. Senior Minister-designate, Yaw Osafo Marfo dared former government officials to make public those who took the decision.

The request letter drew huge public backlash from sections of Ghanaians. Comments on social media were opposed to the content of the said letter. Some Ghanaians charged the current government to reject the request in the interest of the country.



Tuesday January 10, 2017

Mr. President,

OFFICIAL RESIDENCE AND OFFICE

I refer to our agreement on the above subject matter and wish to inform you that I have decided to formally withdraw both requests to continue to stay at my current place of residence, No. 3, Prestige Link, Cantonments and also to use bungalow No. 6, 3rd Avenue, Ridge as my office.

It would appear that these requests threaten to mar the spirit of cooperation with which we as co-chairs of the Joint Transition Team have managed the smooth transfer of power from my administration to yours. I believe that this controversy is absolutely not needed in these early days as your Government settles into office.

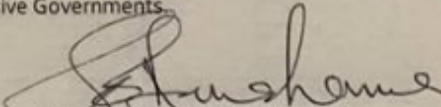
I do recognize that these are facilities that are conventionally extended to Presidents that leave office and I am also mindful of the approval by the Parliament of the Republic of Ghana on Wednesday, 4th January, 2017 at its Twenty-Second Sitting of the Third Meeting of the Fourth Session.

You will recall, Mr. President, that contrary to the erroneous impression created by some persons in Government and the interpretation given to the formal letter submitted on my behalf by Mr. Julius Debrah, this was a follow up to an agreement we had on my choice of accommodation and office. I had never requested to purchase the property.

My request is therefore humbly withdrawn.

As always, my family and I wish you well in your endeavors as you strive to consolidate and advance the gains made by successive Governments.

Kind regards,


H.E. JOHN DRAMANI MAHAMA
FORMER PRESIDENT, REPUBLIC OF GHANA

H.E. NANA ADDO DANKWA AKUFO-ADDO
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF GHANA

Cc:
Asantehene Otumfuo Osei Tutu II
Manhyia Palace
Kumasi- Ghana

The former President on Wednesday sent a letter to President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo withdrawing the request to keep the residence.

"It would appear that these requests threaten to mar the spirit of cooperation with which we as co-chairs of the Joint Transition Team have managed the smooth transfer of power from my administration to yours

I believe that this controversy is absolutely not needed in these days as your government settles into office," the second paragraph of the letter read.

"I had never requested to purchase the property. My request is therefore humbly withdrawn," it continued.

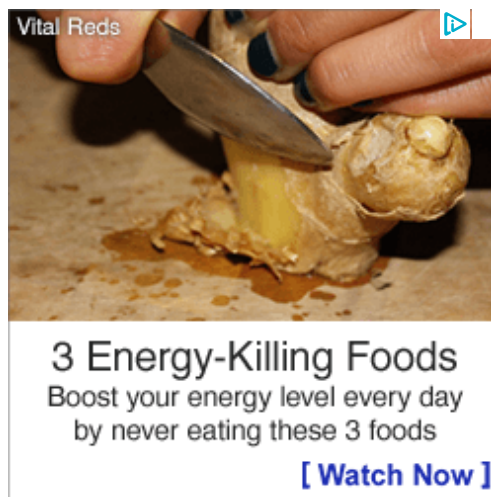
But Dr Asante said given that there is a "firm arrangement as to how we say goodbye to our Presidents," Mr Mahama was supposed to have been granted a temporary stay in the property.

"He is not at the castle or Jubilee House [rather] he is at a house for some reason said to belong to government," he said, adding "he is not asking that he stays in the jubilee House to me it is quiet to say you are going to build a house for me and why not I stay here for some time."

Dr Asante urged Ghanaian leaders to be circumspect in their promises, saying Mr Mahama was supposed to have been notified when his request was not going to be honored.

"In fact if we want to build houses for our leaders, it should be done before they live office," the elder statesman suggested.

Dr Asante proposed that in the future, retiring packages for former Presidents should be the same as the one given to former civil servants. This, he said would empower them to find their own accommodation facilities.



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